

REMARKS:

These remarks are in response to the non-final Office Action mailed April 12, 2006 in which claims 1-30 are pending. Claims 18-30 have been withdrawn from prosecution. Claims 1-17 stand rejected.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claim 2. Claim 2 has been cancelled. Claim 3, which formerly depended from claim 2, has also been amended so that it now depends from claim 1. No new matter has been added to the application in making the above amendments.

2. The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 4, 6, 8-10, and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,200,976 to Gooding (hereinafter referred to as the “976 patent”)

Of the claims rejected in paragraph 2 of the outstanding Office Action, claim 1 is the sole independent claim. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2. The Examiner, on page 5 of the outstanding Office Action, notes that the subject matter of claim 2 is not disclosed by the ‘976 patent (i.e., “[r]egarding claim 2 Gooding teaches every aspect of the claimed invention except Gooding fails to teach a slot in the razor platform, for retaining a razor blade”). “A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference” See MPEP 2131 (*citing Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987)). Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by the ‘976 for at least the above reason. Favorable reconsideration of the above rejection is requested.

Claims 4, 6, 8-10, and 15-17 depend from claim 1 either directly or indirectly. Therefore, for at least the same reasons stated above with regard to claim 1, as well as by virtue of the additional claim recitations included therein, these claims are also not anticipated by the ‘976 patent. Favorable reconsideration of the present rejection of these claims is requested, as well.

13. The Examiner rejected claims 2, 3, 5, 7 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '976 patent in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0055157 to Barone et al (hereinafter referred to as the "'157 reference")

As discussed above, claim 2 was cancelled and the subject matter of claim 2 was incorporated into claim 1. Each of the remaining rejected claims (i.e., claims 3, 5, 7, and 11-13) depends from claim 1. Accordingly, the rejection will be discussed in terms of claim 1 below.

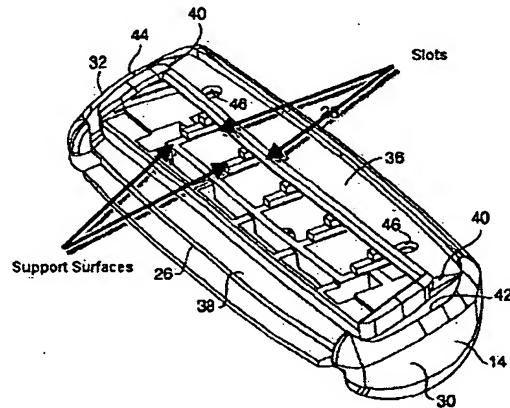
Claim 1, as amended, recites a razor blade platform comprising a base portion, and at least two projections. The at least two projections extend from the base portion, each defining at least a pair of approximately parallel spaced apart support surfaces. Each of said support surfaces on one of the projections is approximately laterally aligned with a corresponding one of the support surfaces defined by the other of the projections. *At least one of said projections includes a slot, open at one end and defined in-part by one of said support surfaces; and wherein said portion of said razor blade is slidably received in said slot.* Each of said support surfaces is adapted to carry a portion of a razor blade extending along said razor blade platform.

In rejecting the claims, the Examiner noted, on p. 5, last ¶ – p. 6, first ¶ that:

...Gooding teaches every aspect of the claimed invention except Gooding fails to teach a slot in the razor blade platform, for retaining a razor blade.

Barone et al. teaches slots (see figure below) defined in part by support surfaces, as seen in figure 4. Razor blade is positioned in said slot, as seen in figures 1-3, said blades being received therein.

The following drawing was also provided:

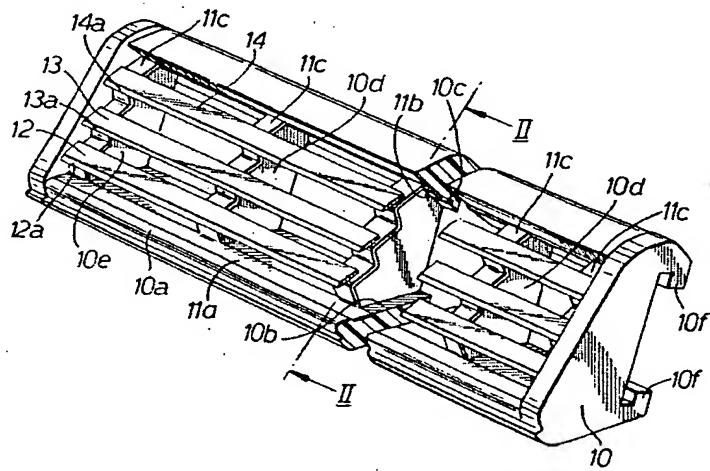


"To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met.

First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." See MPEP 2143. Furthermore, "a prior art reference must be considered in its entirety, i.e., as a whole, including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention." See 2141.02 (*citing W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303 (Fed. Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 851 (1984)).

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner and has traversed the rejection below.

The '976 patent teaches a shaving unit comprising an open framework to which at least one razor blade is secured by its ends. The razor blades each have a cutting edge spaced at a predetermined distance from one surface of the framework which provides a guard surface for the cutting edge. The framework also has supporting surfaces within the boundaries of the framework to which intermediate portions of the razor blade are attached, leaving substantial lengths of the razor blade clear of the framework to permit the unimpeded passage of cut hairs and shaving soap past the cutting edge and thence through the open framework. Two representative drawings are reproduced below:



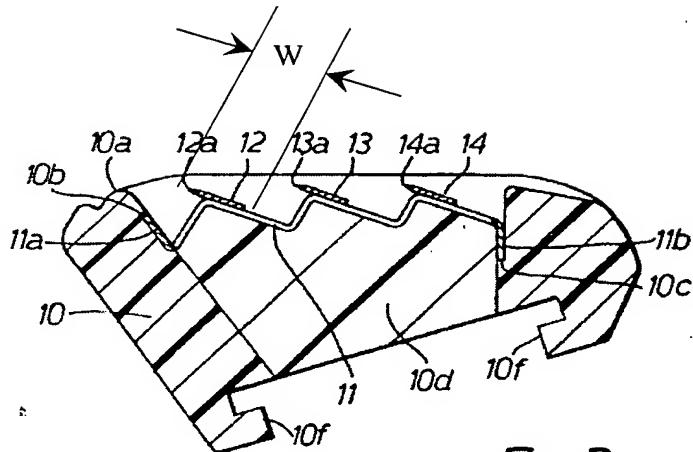


FIG. 2.

Notably, the '976 patent teaches the "stair step" shaped supports for the following reason: "[i]n contrast to the blades currently used in shaving units, the width of the blades 12, 13, and 14 ... being for example within the range of 0.8 to 2.0 millimeters, preferably 1.25 millimeters..." (See the '976 patent, col. 2, lines 9-16). The width ("W") is measured as shown above in the modified FIG. 2. During assembly, each of the narrow blades are placed on a "step" of the stair case-shaped support and, preferably, welded thereto. Therefore, the support is shaped, as shown in the figures, for a specific reason (*i.e.*, so the narrow blades can be welded thereto).

The '157 reference discloses a *method* for manufacturing a razor cartridge is provided that includes the steps of: (a) providing one or more razor blades, each having a length; (b) *forming a body attached to the one or more razor blades*, wherein the body includes a first channel aft of the one or more razor blades that is open to a contact surface of the body, and a second channel forward of the one or more razor blades that is open to the contact surface, and one or more passages extending between the first channel and the second channel; (c) injecting a shaving aid material through one or more ports into one of the first channel, second channel, or the one or more passages; wherein the one or more passages extending between the first channel and the second channel enables the shaving aid material to travel from one of the first channel, second channel, or the one or more passages into the others of the first channel, second channel, or the one or more passages. Two representative drawings

are reproduced below. Fig. 3 depicts a cartridge made from the process described above. Fig. 4 depicts an *imaginary* cartridge frame without razor blades.

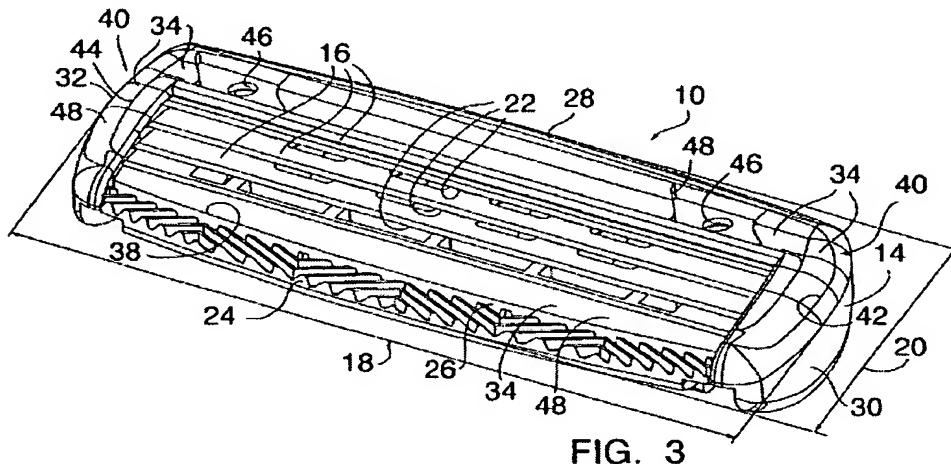


FIG. 3

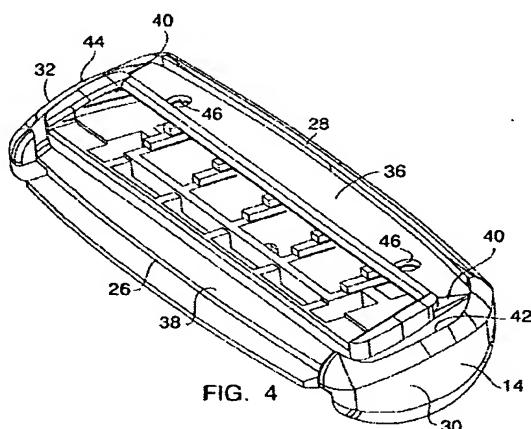


FIG. 4

Notably, the '157 reference discloses a method of manufacturing a razor cartridge in a multi-stage molding operation. The process begins with placing razor blades in a mold, then molding a cartridge frame around the blades (see '157 reference, ¶31). Comfort strips, for example, are then molded in an additional molding step onto the cartridge frame. The advantage of this process is that the plastic material flows around the blades in the shape of the cartridge, and then solidifies. In cartridges like these, holes, or slots, are placed in the rear portion of the blades. During the molding process, the material flows on either side of the

blades, as well as through the holes (or slots) in the blades, so that the blades are captured in the cartridge when the plastic hardens.

Accordingly, the ‘157 reference does not simply teach making a cartridge frame having slots, as claimed in the present application; rather, the ‘157 patent is limited to teaching the molding of cartridge material around (and through) the blades during a molding process. Additionally, since the cartridge material flows around (and through) the blades, then captures the blades once hardened, it is impossible to remove the blades without permanently destroying the molded cartridge. Therefore, FIG. 4, as stated above, is an “imaginary” depiction of the cartridge frame without blades therein since at no time does the cartridge frame, as shown, exist without blades.

Accordingly, there is no motivation for one of skill in the art to modify the ‘976 patent using the teachings of the ‘157 reference. The ‘976 patent teaches forming a stair-case-shaped support and welding narrow blades onto each of the “steps.” It would not have been obvious to one of skill in the art to modify the shape of the supports shown in the ‘976 patent in light of a reference that teaches molding a cartridge frame around blades placed in a mold.

In fact, the ‘976 teaches away from altering the shape of the support at all. As mentioned above, the stair-case-shaped support is necessitated by the “narrow” blades. A “slot-shaped” stair would interfere with the proper function of the blades because the upper portion of a slot would interfere with the exposure and shaving performance of the trailing blades. Put another way, if it is assumed that the blades in the figure shown below are 2.0 mm in width (*i.e.*, the widest blades taught by the ‘976 patent), and the slot captures approximately 75% of the blade, that means A) only 1.5mm of blade material is captured within a slot, and B) the slot would most likely interfere with proper skin flow between blades. The amount of blade material captured by a slot in a preferred embodiment (*i.e.*, blades that are 1.25mm wide), would only decrease. To modify the ‘976 patent to include “slots” would require the use of wider blades, and the use of wider blades is in direct contrast to the teachings of the art cited. Therefore, in light of the ‘976 patent as a whole, it would not be obvious to incorporate slots into the blade support design.

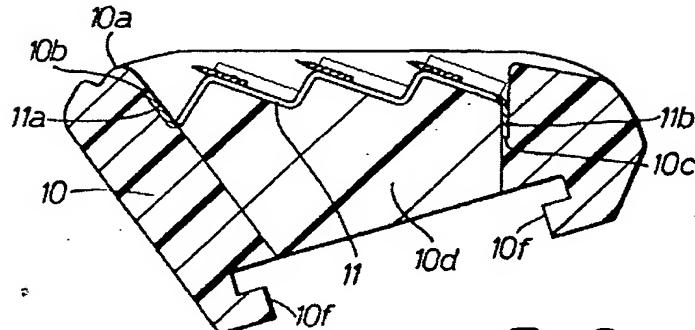


FIG. 2.

Accordingly, without motivation to modify the '976 patent to incorporate "slots" which slidably receive blades, as recited in claim 1, the present invention is neither taught nor suggested by the cited art. Favorable reconsideration of the present rejection of claim 1 (which now includes the recitations of original claim 2) is requested.

Claims 3, 5, 7 and 11-13 depend from claim 1 and, therefore, are also not obvious in light of the cited prior art for at least the reasons stated above with regard to claim 1, as well as by virtue of the additional claim recitations included therein. Favorable reconsideration of the rejection of these claims is requested, as well.

20. The Examiner rejected claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '976 patent in view of the '157 reference in further view of U.S. Patent Application Publ. No. 2003/0217469 to Coffin (hereinafter "the '469 patent")

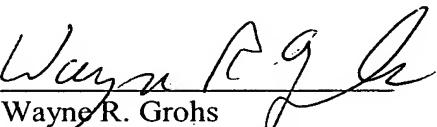
Claim 14 depends from claim 1. As noted above, claim 1 is not obvious in light of the cited prior art (the '976 patent and the '157 reference). The '469 reference does not cure the noted defects of the above rejection. Therefore, for at least the reasons stated above with regard to claim 1, claim 14 is also not obvious in light of the cited prior art. Favorable reconsideration is requested for this rejection, as well.

Summary:

In summary, the Applicant has traversed each rejection made by the Examiner. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejections be withdrawn and the present application be passed onto allowance.

A check in the amount of \$450.00 covering the cost of a two-month extension is included with the present response. No additional fees are believed to be due at this time. However, please charge any deficiencies to Account No. 503342, maintained by the Applicants' attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Wayne R. Grohs
Registration No. 48,945
Attorney for Applicant

Michaud-Duffy Group LLP
306 Industrial Park Road, Suite 206
Middletown, CT 06457-1532
(860) 632-7200